

## **Fun Meal Unites Sinking Valley Presbyterian Church Cares for Community**

**Elder Todd Lewis shared with us the Presbytery's 2023 initiative surrounding food insecurity, and suggested that our church could perhaps consider hosting a community meal. The wheels began turning, and we settled on a Shrove Tuesday meal with fastnachts as the hook. We advertised Friends, Food, and Fastnachts on Facebook, in community fliers, on roadside sandwich boards, and through word-of-mouth, emphasizing a free meal for the community.**

**The response was nearly literally overwhelming! Rough estimates suggested 200 people young and not-so-young dined in or carried meals out, many of whom were known only to one or several congregants -- or none at all! It was an excellent opportunity to open our doors to people of all types and share a little bit of faith, using the Christian significance of Fat Tuesday as a hook. Even with the conscious decision not to put donation boxes on tables, we raised nearly \$200, which will be used for local mission work.**

**The meal united our church in service, too. Nearly all members contributed in some way, whether in making soups, salads, or desserts, in helping during the dinner, in advertising, or elsewhere. I hadn't seen our church family with such fullness and energy in many moons, and the vibrance and bustle of our church that Donut Day made my heart glad! Surely the Lord was with us!**

**We've already penciled in Shrove Tuesday 2024 for a follow-up dinner, and pondered the value of having lower-key meals later in this year. Our church is a ten-minute drive from Tyrone -- we are very much a rural church, so we have the potential to serve a unique community, and certainly did with this meal.**

**Perhaps there are ways for your church to reach those in your unique community that might reduce uncertainty in their lives and offer them a glimpse of the hope, confidence, and peace that being a follower of Christ gives us. May God richly bless not only your outreach, but your church families as you search and plan and share your Light in our often-dark world!**